

City of San José
Coyote Valley Specific Plan

Summary of Task Force Meeting
November 13, 2006
City Hall, Committee Rooms W118-120

Task Force Members Present

Co-chair Councilmember Forrest Williams, co-chair Councilmember Nancy Pyle, Chuck Butters, Eric Carruthers, Helen Chapman, Pat Dando, Russ Danielson, Craige Edgerton, Dan Hancock, Melissa Hippard, Doreen Morgan, Steve Schott, Jr., and Steve Speno.

Task Force Members Absent

Supervisor Don Gage, Gladwyn D'Souza, Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins, Chris Platten, Ken Saso, and Neil Struthers.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present

Michele Beasley (Greenbelt Alliance), Beverly Bryant (HBANC), Mike Griffis (County Roads), Libby Lucas (CA Native Plant Society), Tim Steele (Sobrato Development), and Kerry Williams (Coyote Housing Group).

City and Other Public Agencies Staff Present

Lee Wilcox (Council District 10), Frances Grammer (Council District 2), Rachel Gibson (Office of Supervisor Don Gage), Laurel Prevetti (PBCE), Darryl Boyd (PBCE), Susan Walsh (PBCE), Jared Hart (PBCE), Stefanie Hom (PBCE), Perihan Ozdemir (PBCE), Regina Mancera (PBCE), Melody Tovar (ESD), and Maria Angeles (Public Works).

Consultants Present

Chuck Anderson (Schaaf & Wheeler), Roger Shanks (Dahlin Group), Bill Wagner (HMH Engineers), and Eileen Goodwin (Apex Strategies).

Community Members Present

Julie Ceballos, Mike Campbell, Roger Costa, Jim Crowley, Mini Damodaran, Robert Eltgrogh, Virginia Holtz, Jack Kuzia, Pat Kuzia, Sarah Muller, Art Sanchez, Pete Silva, Sharon Simonson, Al Victors, Don Weden, and Kim Weden.

1. Welcome

The meeting convened at 5:34 p.m. with Co-Chair Councilmember Nancy Pyle welcoming everyone to the Coyote Valley Specific Plan (CVSP) Task Force meeting.

2. Presentation of Water Quality Regulatory Framework

Laurel Prevetti, Deputy Director with the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, introduced Melody Tovar, Deputy Director with the Department of Environmental Services, Darryl Boyd, Principal Planner with the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, and Chuck Anderson with Schaaf and Wheeler. They will be talking about water quality and how it will be addressed in Coyote Valley. All the water quality data will be available in the EIR, which will be publicly available on March 1, 2007.

Melody gave an overview of the water quality regulatory chain. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Fish and Game, the Army Corps of Engineers are all involved in regulating water quality. The primary regulator in San Jose is the California San Francisco Bay Regional Water Control Board. They get their authority from the California Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is regulated by the Federal EPA and is entrusted with regulating any land uses that discharge into waters in the United States.

Melody explained that indoor water usage is transmitted to a wastewater treatment plant where it is treated for pollutants, then discharged into the bay and outdoor water usage goes through a series of storm drain inlets and then through outfalls. There is no treatment involved before it goes into the waterways. The regulators have acknowledged there is a gap in water quality regulations, and have improved treatment requirements through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. NPDES permit elements include public information and participation, public agency activities, illicit connection and illegal dumping, industrial and commercial discharges, construction inspection, new and redevelopment, and water quality monitoring.

Melody indicated how new development affects water quality. On undeveloped or unpaved surfaces, water filters into the ground naturally, however when land is developed, impervious paved surfaces increase runoff, which can increase creek erosion.

Pollutants must be removed before the stormwater enters the storm drain system. Numeric sizing of treatment measures is required based on amount of impervious surface. Stormwater

treatment must be an integral part of the initial project design. Stormwater treatment can look a lot like landscaped amenities.

Melody discussed the Hydromodification Management Plan (HMP). The HMP provides strategies to address stormwater runoff, which include vegetated swales, detention basins, underground vaults, creek modifications and refrigeration of streams. Melody indicated that they would like to move from gray infrastructure (just traditional pipes) to both gray and green infrastructure (both pipes and landscaped amenities) to slow water down before it gets to waterways.

The Task Force provided the following questions and comments. (Please note that comments are shown first, followed by responses in italics):

- What treatment facilities are there for treating surface runoff? *Melody indicated treatment can be simple and small for individual projects. Chuck will talk about specific strategies for Coyote Valley.*
- Bio-filtration sounds great. Do the filtered pollutants accumulate in the soil? Where do they go? Does this process work in the long run? *Melody indicated that sediment may need to be raked out in some detention basins. Studies have shown pollutants tend to layer only a couple of inches, so they do not need to dig deep to remove it. Some bacteria actually like some pollutants and feed off them.*
- Does bio-filtration work for filtering metal pollutants? *Melody indicated they are evaluating long term effects, and there will be information coming down from the State and Federal agencies.*
- What does green infrastructure mean? *Melody clarified that it means ecologically friendly and environmentally-responsive infrastructure. It is intended to mitigate the impacts that new development could cause.*
- Is it true that the quality of treated water is so good that it can cause an imbalance of plant life? *Melody indicated that dry weather/summer flows are regulated to minimize discharges into the salt marsh area of the Bay because the discharge of freshwater can upset the saltwater balance.*
- Green and gray infrastructures are types of filtration systems that will help the bio-swales. The word “bio” indicates there is some biological relationship to attack the pollutants.
- Is green infrastructure less expensive than putting pipes in? *Co-chair councilmember Forrest Williams responded in the negative.*

3. Presentation of the CVSP Storm Water Management Plan

Chuck gave an overview of CVSP water quality management. Coyote Valley is at the head of the watershed and feeds the rest of Santa Clara County. What is done at the Coyote Ridge has an effect on the entire City of San Jose.

Chuck indicated that there is a need for groundwater protection. Coyote Valley is like a bathtub full of gravel. There are two important points: 1) there is no layer on top of the “bathtub

gravel.” It is an “unconfined aquifer,” 2) the depth of groundwater is 0 – 10 feet so contaminants can get into the groundwater easily. All of the municipal wells meet state and federal drinking water standards.

Nitrates are a concern in Coyote Valley. Anytime the nitrate level is above the EPA standard of 10 ppm (parts per million), it causes a problem. Chuck discussed a graphic depicting nitrate levels at certain locations within Coyote Valley. Nitrates can cause health and problems and environmental impacts, and treatment of water can be expensive.

Chuck indicated that perchlorate from highway flares has migrated south toward Gilroy through underground contamination. The ridge between the Llagas Basin and Coyote Basin is a gentle topographic ridge. The Coyote Basin cannot be over pumped, or it might draw the contaminate plume north. Perchlorate is not a direct threat to Coyote Valley, but water resources need to be managed so it does not become threat.

Chuck explained the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Requirements. The City of San Jose is a NPDES Permit co-permittee, and administered through the Santa Clara Valley Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Program (SCVURPPP). The focus is on non-point source pollution. Chuck went over a list of C.3 best management practices. There are two types of basic treatments: flow based and storage based treatment. Coyote Valley is broken down into approximately 20 sub-areas; each sub-area treats water as it runs off from urban areas, prior to getting into receiving water.

Chuck went over the City of San Jose’s C.3 Hydromodification (HMP) goals and requirements, which is part of NPDES. There are some Coyote Valley HMP Basin complications, including the SCVURPPP prohibition of percolation due to groundwater protection concerns. Some basins cannot drain within three to five days, leading to vector control and public health problems. Some HMP alternatives include: 1) no requirement of HMP if the Regional Board finds that Fisher Creek and Coyote Creek are stable; 2) initiating projects to improve Coyote Creek stability in lieu of HMP; or 3) some level of regional in-Valley HMP allowing percolation with pre-treatment. The City is currently working with SCVURPPP, the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), and the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board to determine the right solution for CVSP circumstances.

The Task Force provided the following questions and comments. (Please note that comments are shown first, followed by responses in italics):

- Would stormwater runoff be intercepted before it goes into Fisher Creek? *Chuck indicated the urban areas will have a storm drain system.*
- How would the storm drain system connect to Fisher Creek? *Chuck indicated that pipes will be incorporated both adjacent and parallel to Fisher Creek.*
- Would there be other green bio-swales besides the Parkway? *Chuck indicated the swales are not detailed on the conceptual maps yet.*
- How much will the bio-swales filter? *Chuck indicated the bio-swales will meet C.3 requirements.*

- Can parks be used as infiltration? *Chuck responded in the affirmative.*
- Achieving C.3 requirements is not that difficult. Are the C.3 and HMP permits connected, or are they two different requirements? *Chuck indicated they are two different requirements, but HMP is part of C.3. The treatment of the water quality is not difficult, however hydromodification is difficult because of the prohibition against infiltration.*
- Is the goal to have as much water move through the system because of the percolation limitation? *Chuck responded in the affirmative.*
- How will climate change impacts be addressed? *Chuck indicated that it is difficult to plan for global climate change, however the flow-through treatment helps to minimize impacts.*
- Is Laguna Seca going to be a retention area? *Chuck responded in the affirmative and indicated that Laguna Seca does not percolate very well.*
- Do vectors mean mosquitoes? *Chuck responded in the affirmative.*
- Is there a biological way to manage vectors? *Chuck indicated best way to manage vectors is to not have standing water for a very long time.*

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Adjourn

Co-chair councilmembers Nancy Pyle and Forrest Williams thanked everyone for coming and complemented the presenters on their presentations.

Co-Chair Councilmember Williams adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:40 p.m.

The next Task Force meeting will take place on December 11, 2006.